

hour in transition with President Trump in the White House, while Obama was still President. It was supposed to last an hour; it lasted 2 hours. He said to me: I spent that last hour talking about DACA and Dreamers, telling him how important it was to get this right, that these young people deserved a chance, and he listened very intently. President Obama said: "I hope that he will help you when it comes to these Dreamers."

The first time I ever met Donald Trump was on his Inauguration Day as President, not too far from here at a luncheon, and the first thing I said to him was, I hope you will give those Dreamers a chance to become part of America.

He said: Senator DURBIN, don't worry. I am going to take care of those Dreamers.

In the first year of his Presidency, he tried to abolish the DACA Program and subject these Dreamers to deportation. It was a very dark period. For many of them, they were despondent. Several of them said they couldn't take it anymore, the pressure they were under to create a life in America under the shadow of deportation and now have a President who was really determined to make them leave America.

Well, the courts took a look at what President Trump had to do, all the way up to the Supreme Court across the street. It was Chief Justice Roberts who wrote the decision, which said the method that Donald Trump's administration used to eliminate DACA was stricken as "arbitrary and capricious."

So there was a new lease on life and a new opportunity for them, until Friday—when the Federal judge in Texas made the most recent ruling. On Friday night, a Federal judge in Texas issued a ruling declaring that the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, was unlawful, and the judge blocked the Biden administration from approving new DACA applications, a new setback for the Dreamers.

This decision was made in response to a lawsuit filed by Republican State attorneys general. It was the culmination of a long campaign, which included the action of President Trump, by Republicans to deport the Dreamers. What is it about these young people that infuriates the Republicans so much? Well, I will tell you what I found as I have come to know them. They are some of the most amazing stories you could imagine. Not just the threat that I mentioned earlier, the shadow of deportation over their lives, but what they have done anyway—becoming doctors and nurses and teachers and engineers, serving in our Army, working for America in essential jobs in the midst of a pandemic. It is an amazing group of people. It is just the kind of people we want and need for the future of this country.

But let me state this unequivocally: The cruel and misguided decision of this court will not stand. DACA is a lawful exercise of executive prosecu-

torial discretion by the Department of Homeland Security. More than 800,000 young people in our country have received DACA protection, and they help save lives every day as nurses and doctors and first responders. They contribute to our economy and our future as business owners, engineers, and teachers. They are a vital part of our communities as friends, family members, and loved ones. America is the only home these Dreamers have ever known, and Congress has waited long enough—in fact, it has waited too long to allow them to finally become American citizens.

Friday's ruling is yet another reminder of the hell that these young people have put up with over the past two decades. Under the Trump administration, Dreamers endured one attack after another.

When former President Trump attempted to repeal DACA, it put hundreds of thousands of young people at risk of being deported to countries they didn't even remember.

When the Supreme Court ruled that the former President's repeal of DACA was unlawful, he simply defied the Court's decision and stopped DACA applicants from being approved. For months, President Trump refused to reopen the program for new applicants despite the clear direction of the U.S. Supreme Court. Approximately 300,000 of these young people were unable to receive the protections they deserved because of President Trump's unilateral, hateful action.

In response to a court order, DACA was finally reopened for the new applicants in December, but now, just as the Biden administration is processing these applications, the door was shut again in the Federal court in Texas on Friday.

In the words of one Dreamer, Adonias Arevalo, "It's such an uncertainty, not to be able to plan my life."

Thankfully, President Biden has vowed to appeal this decision, but we need to prevent conservative judicial activists on the bench, politicians in black robes, from striking down the President's lawful efforts to protect Dreamers. Congress cannot wait any longer. America cannot wait any longer. Senate Democrats need to provide a permanent legislative solution for the Dreamers. We need to act swiftly.

I hope that my Republican colleagues with conscience will think long and hard about whether they are going to stand in the way of the Dreamers at this moment in history. We need their help, and not just some halfhearted symbolic attempt but genuinely to give these young people a fighting chance to make America a better nation.

To all the Dreamers out there, I promise you, we will work as hard as necessary to get this job done as quickly as possible.

#### NATIONALS PARK SHOOTING

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, on Saturday night, baseball fans at Nationals Park here in Washington, DC, not far from where we stand, were sent into a panic by a sound that has become all too familiar in American cities: the sound of gunfire.

In the middle of the sixth inning, the teams left the field when it was reported that three people were shot outside the stadium on South Capitol Street. That burst of gunfire reverberated throughout the stadium. It could be heard on television and radio broadcasts of the game. It was bad; it could have been worse. Thankfully, nobody inside the stadium was harmed, and many thanks to the first responders for keeping the attendees safe.

But the photos and videos from Saturday night tell a clear story. We are a nation that has become traumatized by gun violence.

The Fourth of July weekend, the city of Chicago, a city I dearly love and am honored to represent, there were 104 gunshot victims that weekend, 19 deaths.

We have come to accept, sadly, mass shooting as a possibility anywhere in America, at a baseball park, in a movie theater, in houses of worship, even in our schools.

Mass shootings happen on the streets of Chicago almost every weekend. Just this last weekend, more than 50 were shot in our city, including 7 children and teenagers. The sad reality is gun violence has become as American as baseball.

The question before this Senate again and again and again is, Will we do anything about it? Will we take minimum steps to reduce gun violence in America, steps like making it more difficult for convicted felons and unstable people to buy firearms?

Nearly every American supports that, and yet the gaps in the Federal gun laws continue. Right now, it is simply too easy for a convicted felon or person with a history of serious mental illness to buy a gun from an unlicensed dealer. A person—no questions asked—can easily buy a gun from an unlicensed seller just minutes away from the city of Chicago, in the State of Indiana, and that gun will be sold and resold many times over in our city of Chicago—many times the same day.

In March, the House passed H.R. 8, a bipartisan measure to close the gaps in our background checks system. Senator CHRIS MURPHY of Connecticut and Senator MANCHIN of West Virginia have been leading negotiations to get bipartisan support for that bill in the Senate. I am waiting for their signal, and I hope to receive it—that we are ready to move on that legislation.

I hope Senate Republicans will join us in supporting this and other commonsense measures, like confirming a Director for the Agency that enforces the gun laws on the book—ATF—for the first time since 2015. Too many lives have been lost to gun violence in

this country. It is time for us to come together and put an end to the senseless violence.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

### THE ECONOMY

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, I am starting to feel a little bit like a broken record. I am here on the floor again to echo the concerns of my constituents and so many folks across our great country. People across the country are cautiously checking their bank accounts, and they are looking at the price of milk, bread, and things that they have to buy every day. They are driving out of their way to see which gas stations even have gas, and when they do find that, they are looking for the lowest price.

Just as we are starting to come out of the pandemic, prices are starting to rise, and our dollar isn't going as far. Why? Because the Democrats want to spend their way out of a pandemic, and it really makes no sense. They are throwing trillions around like it is Monopoly money. It is not targeted to those who need it the most. It is on policy items that only appease their base—the far left—not even a majority of their party. They are flooding the zone with borrowed money like a credit card with no limit. They did it with their stimulus package earlier in the year, and it was disguised as a COVID relief package. Now they are getting ready to try the same thing again.

Last week, Leader SCHUMER announced that the Democrats had reached an agreement on a budget reconciliation resolution, which is like the pregame warm-up to the next reconciliation package. The pricetag for that agreement has been set at \$3.5 trillion. Let me take a minute to highlight what I think is wrong with the bill.

First of all, I am not sure how anyone can call this an agreement. One Democratic Senator, who doesn't appear to have been consulted on the so-called agreement in the first place, said the package needs to be fully paid for. Let me translate that to you. That means we need tax increases. Last week, we talked about the 30 new tax increases that will probably be in this bill. On the other hand, we have Democratic Senators saying it is OK if this package adds to the deficit—\$3.5 trillion added to the \$30 trillion that we are already in debt. We already know at least one Senator wants the top-line number to be as much as \$6 trillion while others are calling for \$2 to \$3 tril-

lion, which, by the way, is still too much spending.

It doesn't seem like everyone has fully committed to this so-called agreement. It appears the Democrats are in disarray when it comes to agreeing to this. Announcing there is an agreement when they still have Members of their own party arguing over the final top-line number and how it will be paid for is a pretty interesting strategy. The only thing I can guess is that the strategy is really to pull the wool over all of our eyes. Trying to sell the agreement of a top-line number as a win is like saying that you have won the game after the first snap.

Folks, you have to play the game. You can't go by the first quarter's results. You have to play the entire game.

Second, I can't understand why some of my colleagues across the aisle are still trying to sell this tax and spending bill as human and soft infrastructure. Most people have never heard of that. I haven't been up here long, but I know enough to know there is really no such thing as human and soft infrastructure. For some reason, we keep adding definitions to Webster's Dictionary. It appears that our Democratic colleagues have, once again, duped a few members of the media, as they can't stop parroting this "human infrastructure" phrase.

Let's just call the package what it is: a spending plan on progressive social justice policies that will be paid for by the American taxpayers by 30 tax increases. It has nothing to do with infrastructure, even if they could define what infrastructure of the human and soft variety is. I know reckless tax and spending spree is not as catchy as soft infrastructure, but at least it is accurate.

Lastly—and this is the most important part—there are costs associated with the level of spending that the Democrats are laying out, real costs that hurt American families. Whether it is fully paid for by tax increases or whether it adds to the deficit, it all boils down to the same thing: the cost to American families across our country, the small business owner, the operator, the manufacturing worker, the farmer, the moms and dads. Hard-working Americans across the country will be impacted at the absolute worst time, when they are trying to recover from a pandemic.

Take the cost of tax increases on small businesses, for example. According to the Job Creators Network, 1 million—that is 1 million—small businesses will feel the financial strain of tax increases through this bill—1 million. Many of these small businesses are still struggling after having been shuttered in place for a year and having battled against government-induced workforce shortages. With only 8 percent of small businesses on a solid economic footing after this past year—only 8 percent of our small businesses are really, actually, getting back on

their feet—we should be working to help every small business see the light at the end of the tunnel, not increasing the heavy hand of government and keeping them in the dark. It makes no sense.

Then there is the "let's just keep spending and add to the deficit approach." The cost of spending so much and adding to the deficit means more inflation. More inflation means your dollar doesn't go near as far as it has in the past.

In the June jobs report, we saw inflation up 4.5 percent, and the consumer price index increased by 5.4 percent, the biggest monthly jump in over a decade.

The rising cost of inflation means that Americans are making tough choices on what is most important to them, like filling up your car with gas or buying food for your family. There is no reason why we should have to be making these choices.

In a nation as great as ours, hard-working Americans shouldn't have to choose. American families are caught in the middle of rising prices and the Democrats' never-ending need to appease the far left.

And then there is the Democrats' view of America, one where Big Government reigns supreme. Well, let me tell you, the Big Government approach does not work, and it never has.

Alabamians want Big Government to get out of the way because they know that Big Government programs only tie their hands and stifle innovation and growth.

We need to give folks an opportunity, not a handout, and right now, Democrats are on the wrong track with that. A government-subsidized economic recovery is not an economic recovery. It is an entitlement state. We need to get back to work.

Prosperity is not purchased through the expansion of Big Government. How many times have we heard that? The expansion of Big Government safety net programs does not make people prosperous. Prosperity is found within the ideas of the American people. It always has been, and it always will.

Democrats are signaling that they are OK with the cost of American families if it means that they can pay for a whole grab bag of far-left policies, like the expansion of Medicare, free college, and amnesty for illegal immigrants.

If all this wasn't bad enough, here is the worst of it: Our Democratic colleagues have taken their priorities that are too radical to pass the Senate and creating an if-then scenario with true infrastructure negotiations.

Forced by far-left voices in their party, Senator SCHUMER and Speaker PELOSI have decided a massive spending bill that has nothing to do with the pandemic or infrastructure should hold actual infrastructure legislation hostage. In their world, if we pass a partisan spending bill, then we can pass infrastructure.